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### **From *pechalbari* to *iselenici*: Migration history of Macedonians**

Maria Todorova in her influential book „Imagining the Balkans” writes that “[m]ost important in the social domain is the Ottoman legacy in the demographic sphere. This was a long-term development that proved impossible or very difficult to undo, with immediate repercussions today. The demographic history of the Ottoman Empire comprises problems pertaining to the geographic movement of the population (colonization, migrations); demographic processes (fertility, mortality, nuptiality, and so on); and other types of population movements (religious shifts, social mobility, and so on) (Todorova 2009: 174).

Macedonia is one of the Balkan countries with long tradition of both internal (as a part of the Ottoman Empire, and later as a Yugoslav Republic) and external emigration. It is estimated that from 350,000 to 700,000 Macedonians live abroad. It should be noted that in the very Republic of Macedonia live only 2,000,000 people.

During its history Macedonia has always been a multiethnic, multifaith and multinational country. Nowadays, according to the latest census from 2002, Orthodox Macedonians constitute 64.2% of the population, while Albanians – 25.2%, Turks – 3.9%, Roma – 2.7%, Serbs – 1.8%, and others – 2.4%. Therefore, talking about the migration of Macedonians, if not specified otherwise, I mean first of all the citizens of Macedonia in general, regardless of their ethnicity or nationality.

In this paper, writing about the history of the Macedonian migration, I follow Todor Chepreganov who singles out historical phases in the movements from Macedonia. The first one was after the Ilinden Uprising (1903) when people left their houses in order to protect themselves against terror and repressions. The second phase was after the Balkan Wars and the First World War. It was a time of migration to distant countries, like Australia or the USA. The third wave of mass migration was after the World War II, and was connected with urbanization and collectivization. It was predominantly migration from villages to cities. The next, fourth wave, covers the period from the end of the 1960s to the 1990s. It was labour migration abroad, especially to Western Europe. Of this period female mobility is characteristic: in 1971, 18.1% migrants were women, while ten years later – 25.6% (Chepreganov 2010: 233). The last phase has been from the independence of Macedonia (1991) until now. It is also economic migration to Western Europe and overseas countries.

However, for nowadays migrants high education is characteristic, and the so-called brain drain takes place (Chepreganov 2010: 224).

### **Overseas migrations and traditional *pechalba***

The 19<sup>th</sup> century was the time of labour mobility of men within the Ottoman Empire, and saw waves of refugees after uprisings against the Ottomans.

Albania, northern Greece, south-eastern Serbia and Macedonia are among the main centres of seasonal / temporary labour migration in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Balkans (Hristov 2010: 29). The migrants worked typically in seasonal pastoralism, sheep breeding, or as craftsmen. A Polish historian Adam Walaszek in his book “Migrations of Europeans 1650-1914” mentions that the period between 1750 and 1850 saw an expansion of seasonal migration in Europe. For example, he points out the long history of this kind of mobility in the area south of the Alps (Walaszek 2007: 84), but, interestingly, there is no information about the Ottoman Empire. It was “Turkey-in-Europe”, wasn't it?

Traditional *pechalba* or *gurbet* was seasonal and clearly male labour migration. I argued elsewhere that even nowadays we can speak about some kind of continuity of this traditional model (Bielenin-Lenczowska 2010). *Pechalbari* worked above all as farmers, shepherds or craftsmen. They used to leave their home villages after St. George's Day (6<sup>th</sup> May), perceived as the beginning of the spring-summer season, and return after St. Demetrius's Day (8<sup>th</sup> November), the end of the harvesting season. Late autumn and winter were the time of the most important family celebrations – weddings, baptisms or circumcisions, and even symbolic funerals (migrants who died abroad were symbolically buried and lamented for in their family villages; nowadays there are numerous companies that transport bodies from abroad to Macedonia; migrants are almost always buried in the country of origin). For the numerous young men among the *pechalbari*, migration was a kind of initiation. Not only did they return with the earned amount of money but also with new experiences gained through “having been in the world”<sup>1</sup>. Then, during the time of return to their home places, *pechalbari* had the opportunity to meet their future spouses. Muslims in the mountain regions were strictly endogamous, thus engagements as well as weddings were organised exclusively in the home villages of the *pechalbari*.

Possibly the oldest centre that emitted craftsmen – builders and potters – is north-western

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<sup>1</sup> See the example of the migration of young men in Mexico examined by Kandel and Massey, quoted by Levitt and Glick Schiller 2004: 1016 f.

Macedonia, the region of Tetovo and Debar. Groups of *debarlias* (masters from the Debar region) were famous among constructors. Petko Hristov mentions that in other *pechalbari* centres like eastern Serbia or mid-western Bulgaria tales are still preserved of how the legendary builders (*dylgeri*) who built the capitals Belgrade and Sofia learned their skills from *debarlias* (Hristov 2010: 31). In his manuscript *Debar i debarsko niz vekovite* (Debar and the Debar area through the centuries), written at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and published only in 2004, Krsto Kostov, an emigrant to Sofia himself, describes in detail the life of migrants from the Debar region who went in groups (*tajfi*) to Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria or Romania to work as tailors, masons, dairyman, bakers and innkeepers (cf. Ristovska-Josifovska 2009).

Petko Hristov rightly, in my opinion, estimates the reasons for this kind of economic mobility: “The activation of male *gurbet* in the late centuries of existence of the Ottoman Empire was caused (...) by the breakup of the agrarian system in the Empire and by the socio-economical crisis in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century that led in the mountain regions to a decline of the well-developed and state-maintained network of sheep breeders that supplied the army and the large cities. (...) To this we must add the economical collapse that followed the decades of feudal conflicts and violence, and the constant raids by various villain groups, especially in Western Macedonia.”(Hristov 2010: 32).

After the Kresna-Razlog uprising (1878-1879) politically motivated migrations and refugee waves dominated as a result of insecurity and terror, uprisings, propaganda, wars and international decisions (Ristovska-Josifovska 2010: 81).

Macedonians migrated to Bulgaria in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century after numerous uprisings against the Ottoman Empire and later – after the Balkan Wars (1912-13). Ristovska-Josifovska quotes different number estimates according to various researchers: from 200,000 to 1,000,000 (Ristovska-Josifovska 2010: 82-83). One of the most popular destinations among the refugees was the Bulgarian city of Varna.

The end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century again saw economic migration, especially to distant countries – first men, then whole families emigrated to Australia and Canada, and – to a lesser extent – to the United States (especially after the introduction of quotas in the 1920s).

Statistical data, especially on the early migration, usually says about the so-called ethnic Macedonians, i.e. also including Macedonians from the area which is now Greece (Aegean

Macedonia) and Bulgaria (Pirin Macedonia), or it indicates the nationality of the country of which Macedonia was a part during its history: Turkey (the Ottoman Empire) or Yugoslavia.

The largest concentrations of Macedonians were formed in Melbourne (17,286), Sydney (11,630) and Wollongong (4,279 – about 1.6% of the Wollongong population). In total, according to the 2006 census, 40,655 Australian residents are listed as having been born in the Republic of Macedonia (20,655 males and 20,000 females). In the 1960s, in response to rising unemployment, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia permitted its citizens to seek employment abroad. This resulted in the migration of almost 100,000 Yugoslavs to Australia between 1961 and 1976. Many were Macedonian-speakers from the Bitola and Ohrid regions. As Kupiszewski et al. (2009: 58) notes, in Australia live constantly ca. 50,000 Macedonians and this number has been stable for decades.

In Canada the biggest group of Macedonians lives in Toronto (between 80,000 and 150,000). The early 20<sup>th</sup> century migration from broader Macedonia to Canada is characterized as mainly political, as it followed the unsuccessful 1903 Ilinden uprising against the Ottoman Empire. Many Macedonian migrants found jobs in Toronto (particularly in metal industry), from which they progressed to owning restaurants, grocery stores and butcher shops (van Selm 2007).

### **Rural-urban migrations and Gastarbeiters**

After the World War II, the new social and political order determined the life of people, namely communism. Collectivization and urbanization, most intensive in the late 1940s and early 1950s meant that people began to migrate from the countryside to the cities. In the period of 1945 to 1953 this kind of mobility constituted approx. 45% of all migrations (Chepreganov 2009: 222). At that time it was primarily Orthodox Macedonians who migrated. This changed radically the ethnic and religious composition of western Macedonia, where formerly mixed Muslim-Orthodox villages are now either inhabited only by Muslims or abandoned, as Muslims have emigrated abroad.

Rural-urban migration among the Macedonians is high even nowadays. At least a quarter of the country's population lives now in Skopje, the capital. In 2002, 121 villages had no residents any more, while 366 had fewer than 50 residents (van Selm 2007).

Another major wave of emigration have been departures of men as guest workers (gastarbeiters) to Germany, and to a lesser extent to Austria and Switzerland. During the 1950s and 1960s, Germany, faced with labour shortages, signed several bilateral recruitment agreements: with Italy in 1955, Greece and Spain in 1960, Turkey in 1961, Morocco and Tunisia in 1963, Portugal in 1964, Tunisia

in 1965 and finally with Yugoslavia in 1968. The programme lasted until 1973. As Mila Maeva notes, “the highest levels of emigration from Yugoslavia were recorded in 1973 (...), when emigrants numbered 1,1 million people, out of whom 860,000 were economically active, while another 250,000 were family members” (Maeva 2009: 188). Andrzej Bonasewicz gives some smaller numbers: in 1950 there were 1,800 workers from Yugoslavia in Germany, in 1967 – 97,700, and in 1975 – 418,700. At the same time non-guest workers migrated, e.g. family members. Thus, the total number of emigrants from Yugoslavia in Germany was: in 1950 – 24,500, in 1967 – 140,500, in 1975 – 677,900. In 1985, in turn, due to restrictions introduced by the state, the number decreased to 591,000 people (Bonasewicz 2001: 50).

According to Lidija Stojanovik Lafazanovska, it was a typical *pechalba*, because more than 95% of the emigrants were men, and this mobility was (or at least was perceived as such) temporary (Stojanovik Lafazanovska 2008: 27). This was a policy of guest work programmes, indeed. „The migrants – writes Russell King – were subjected to a selection process to ensure that they were strong and healthy, and were given only short-term contracts” (King et al. 2010: 42). Moreover, the accepting countries aimed at adding workers to the labour force without adding permanent residents to the population (Martin 2010: 83).

After the expiry of their contracts some migrants returned, and some brought their families and settled abroad permanently. According to the data from 2011, there were 67,147 Macedonians in Germany and more than 60,000 in Switzerland (see table 1)<sup>2</sup>. In some villages of western Macedonia *Germanci* (literally: “the Germans”, but this word is used for migrants to Germany) came back for their retirement (cf. Koperkiewicz 2009).

It should be noted that a major wave of migration was (and still is) formed of seasonal workers working in Slovenia. While in Yugoslavia they were internal migrants working in a richer country of the same republic, after the disintegration of Yugoslavia the situation changed. First of all, the visa regime until 2009 greatly reduced the number of people leaving Macedonia. Still it was and is temporary migration, especially regarding the Orthodox Macedonians and Macedonian-speaking Muslims from the western and south-western parts of the country. Every three or four months the men come back home, and they do not bring their families to Slovenia. Their wives and children remain in Macedonia. In Slovenia, according to the 2011 data, 20,498 Macedonians stay permanently. Thus, this number should be doubled, if we consider also seasonal migrants.

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<sup>2</sup> For comparison: In 1975 the main groups in Germany were Italians (574,000), Yugoslavs (515,000), Turks (469,000), Greeks (343,000) and Spaniards (246,000). Italians, Germans and Spaniards were the largest groups in Switzerland at that time (Castles and Kosack 2010: 3).

There was also another important political migration wave in the 1950s from Macedonia, namely to Turkey. In 1952 Macedonia signed an agreement with Turkey about the so-called 'free' emigration of Turks from Yugoslavia. In fact, many Albanians and Macedonian-speaking Muslims migrated, as they declared themselves to be Turks. However, as ethnographic data shows, it was not 'free' migration, but there were numerous mechanisms for forceful expulsion (Svetieva 2009: 45). Altogether 127,000 persons emigrated: ethnic Turks, the Torbesh and other Muslims from Macedonia (esp. Albanians). Macedonia was a kind of a transit country for those migrants because the procedure of getting a permit to leave was very liberal. Therefore, a significant number of 20,440 persons were migrants from Kosovo, Sandzak, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and southern Serbia, of which many had given up their going to Turkey and stayed in Macedonian villages and cities (Svetieva 2009: 47).

### **Contemporary patterns of emigration or *iseluvanje***

After the independence of Macedonia in 1991, migrations to Western European countries intensified. Especially desired direction is Italy (northern part of the country, around Venice, Treviso and Bologna). Currently 89,900 citizens of Macedonia live in Italy, most of whom are there legally now and have a work permit<sup>3</sup>. Again however, this number includes Orthodox Macedonians, Macedonian-speaking Muslims, Turks and Albanians.

The German-speaking countries – Germany, Austria and Switzerland in particular – are a destination for Albanians from Macedonia. A large part of the Albanian diaspora lives there alongside many Albanians from Kosovo and Albania. Only the latter, however, are included in the statistics as Albanians.

Regarding migrant communities in northern Italy, I will attempt to briefly describe the daily life of Macedonian citizens abroad. For three years I have conducted ethnographic fieldwork in two sites: villages of western Macedonia (Reka region) and in Italy (Ravenna). The group researched is Macedonian-speaking Muslims (Torbeshi)<sup>4</sup>.

As I said, in nowadays pattern of migration whole families migrate and stay abroad almost the

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<sup>3</sup> According to the Italian immigration law most of them have the so called residence permit, *permesso di soggiorno*; some of them have already a resident card, *carta di soggiorno* (Sciortino 2004: 191).

<sup>4</sup> The project is realized with the financial support from the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education No. N N109 094839 "Ponadpaństwowe więzi, relacje społeczne i etniczne w kontekście migracji zarobkowej Macedońskich Muzułmanów z Macedonii do Włoch" (Trans-state ties, social and ethnic relations in the context of labour migration of Macedonian Muslims from Macedonia to Italy). See more about various identity declarations of Torbeshi: Bielenin-Lenczowska 2008.

whole year. Nevertheless, it is still to some extent male migration. Men work predominantly as constructors, while women stay at home. Most of these women, especially Muslims, do not participate in public life, not only because of their ignorance of the Italian language, but mostly due to the cultural construction of gender relations known from their country or region of origin.

In their native villages women are not allowed to travel alone or to work outside their home (sometimes they can work as teachers, cleaning ladies or nurses). In Italy, they claim, their husbands do not allow them to go to work. However, men themselves do not confirm it. Moreover, as one of the female interlocutors says: *We are looking for work, but at the same time we are praying to God that we do not get this job!* There are several reasons for this kind of attitude: among others, they could have to learn Italian. There are free courses of the Italian language, but Muslim women do not want to attend the classes. Usually they say they do not have enough time, but there is also another reason they do not want to admit directly. Many of them finished only elementary school in their home towns (I also met interlocutors who had completed only four classes of primary school<sup>5</sup>), so in fact now they are semi-illiterate.

The daily lifestyle of Macedonian migrants in Italy is very similar to this in Macedonia. It refers to gender relations between husbands and wives, the position of a woman in the family and society, but also to their everyday activities: visiting neighbours to chat and drink coffee (Turkish or Macedonian, not Italian!), and watching Macedonian films or – more frequently – recordings from weddings or after-circumcisions parties.

The migrants brought along with them their daily customs. Not only do they drink Macedonian coffee (made from coffee brought from Macedonia and prepared in *gjezva*), but also prepare their traditional meals, like *musaka*, *tavche gravche*, *pita* or *balkava*, and some women bake bread. When it comes to religious practice, women, like in Macedonia, do not visit mosques and their activities are limited to houses. I met only one young woman who became a more radical Muslim in Italy, which for men is a more frequent phenomenon. They visit the house of prayer (in Ravenna the mosque is under construction) and meet with Muslims of other ethnic and national origin – Moroccan, Italian, Senegalese.

In Macedonia, Macedonian-speaking Muslims are often perceived as not 'real', i.e. not radical, but rather traditional, liberal Muslims. Sometimes they are even considered to be 'Crypto-Christians'. My interlocutors claim to be Muslims, although most of them understand their religiosity through

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<sup>5</sup> For further education children had to travel to the nearby town. Some girls were not allowed to do so.

only a few rules: keeping Ramadan, not drinking alcohol and not eating pork. The religious practice is similar in Macedonia and in Italy. Some women wear a headscarf and some of them pray. Islam is for them, however, a very important marker of identity. None of my interlocutors would allow their children to have a relationship with a non-Muslim. It regards both sons and daughters. Moreover, a lot of *pechalbar* villages are still endogamous. This means that the partner should not only be Muslim, but also a Muslim from Macedonia or even from the same village.

Macedonia is perceived as a place of reference. Twice a year (up to one month in August and ca. two weeks in the New Year) the migrants travel to their villages of origin. This is the time for visiting families, building or renovating houses and organize weddings. It is still considered that weddings and circumcisions should be organised in Macedonia in a traditional way, it means with Gypsy music, traditional food and costumes. Additionally, as I said, villages are still endogamous. Even young *pechalbari* living almost the whole year in Italy know they should find a Muslim wife / husband, preferably from Macedonia, and they *return* for the wedding to the country of origin of their parents. Probably it would be not very difficult to organize a traditional Torbesh wedding in Italy, but lavish weddings as well as big, rich houses – frequently unfinished – are determinants of prestige of *pechalbari*.

My interlocutors, although they often call their migration *pechalba* or *gurbet*, observe a qualitative difference in the new pattern of migration and define their mobility *iseluvanje* (migration) and call themselves *iselenici* (migrants). It should be noted that they are the first generation of migrants, and the second one – their children – is completely different. They attend Italian schools and make international friendships, and their relationships with the country of origin are significantly weaker. Maybe this model of migration will change, as in the Filipino case described by Russell et al. „Most emigrations start as a migration of young adult males, followed by family migration as the migration stream matures, and conditions for settlement improve. If the emigration and immigration rules allow it, and if labour market in the origin and *destination* countries are favourable, single unaccompanied female migration may follow” (King et al. 2010: 78).

## **Immigration**

In its history, Macedonia experienced not only emigration, but also immigration. After the Balkan Wars, under the signed convention between Greece and Bulgaria (November 1919) for exchange of populations, tens of thousands of Macedonians from Greece were forced to leave their homes. A



part of this population, today called “Bezhanči” (refugees, in Bulgarian), was relocated to the Struma Region in what is now eastern Macedonia (Borisovska).

After the civil war in Greece (1946-49) thousands of Macedonians were evacuated, fled or were expelled. The total number of displaced people was estimated to exceed 100,000, of which 60,000 were sent to European countries and the rest went overseas (Borisovska). It is estimated that 30,000 to 40,000 came to Yugoslavia, especially to the People’s Republic of Macedonia (Monova 2009: 9). The Greek government, in an organized manner, settled them in various towns and villages (Monova 2009: 7).

In 1947 those who had fled from Greece lost their citizenship. This meant that the exiles and refugees were unable to return to the land of their birth. Many of the refugees remained in Eastern European countries, esp. the Soviet Union, Poland, Hungary or Czechoslovakia, or left for the West. Some of them decided to move to Macedonia (at that time the Yugoslav Republic). It should be noted that amongst Macedonian scholars this refugee wave is not called “immigration” but “return” (see: Borisovska).

Currently Macedonia experiences little immigration. However, as the country seeks to join the European Union, the Aliens Act was introduced in March 2007 in accordance with EU requirements.

In 2011, 1,147 foreigners settled in the Republic. The largest number came from Turkey (455) and Albania (292). It is also important to consider migrants from Kosovo. Macedonia has adopted them as political refugees after the war in Kosovo in 1999. Various data speak of 20,000 to 120,000 people.

Table 1. Macedonian citizens in Europe (2011), first ten

|             |                                  |
|-------------|----------------------------------|
| Italy       | 89,900 (data from December 2010) |
| Germany     | 67,147                           |
| Switzerland | 60,741                           |
| Sweden      | 25,805                           |
| Serbia      | 22,755                           |
| Slovenia    | 20,498                           |
| Austria     | 17,992                           |
| Croatia     | 4,270 (2001 census)              |

|         |   |
|---------|---|
| Denmark | 2,499 (by citizenship) (4,035 – by country of origin) |
| Belgium | 2,360 (data from 2006)                                |

Table 2.

Macedonian citizens in EU countries (2011)

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| Italy           | 89,900   |
| Germany         | 67,147   |
| Sweden          | 25,805   |
| Slovenia        | 20,498   |
| Austria         | 17,992   |
| The Netherlands | 10,000-15,000  |
| UK              | 10,000 (est.)  |
| Hungary         | 5,000 (est.)   |
| Slovakia        | 4,600 (est. by OECD)                                     |
| Belgium         | 3,419  |
| Denmark         | 2,499 (by citizenship) (4,035 – by country of origin)    |
| France          | 2,300  |
| Czech Republic  | 2,068 (2009 census)                                      |
| Bulgaria        | 1,091  |
| Greece          | 962 (data from 2001)                                     |
| Romania         | 731  |
| Poland          | 233 (data from 2002) – 2,000 (est. by MFA <sup>6</sup> ) |
| Finland         | 200 (est.)   |
| Luxembourg      | 200 (est.)   |
| Spain           | 200 (est.)   |
| Cyprus          | N/A  |
| Estonia         | N/A  |
| Iceland         | N/A  |
| Ireland         | N/A  |
| Lithuania       | N/A  |
| Latvia          | N/A  |
| Malta           | N/A  |
| Portugal        | N/A  |

Table 3.

<sup>6</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Macedonia.

Foreign residents in Macedonia from European countries (first ten; data from 2000-2011)

|                        |       |
|------------------------|-------|
| Serbia*                | 2,169 |
| Albania                | 1,956 |
| Turkey                 | 1,502 |
| Bulgaria               | 543   |
| Ukraine                | 401   |
| Greece                 | 358   |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | 299   |
| UK                     | 288   |
| Germany                | 261   |
| Croatia                | 219   |

\* 2000-2003 as Yugoslavia, 2004-2006 as Serbia and Montenegro.

Table 4.

Foreign residents in Macedonia from outside Europe (first six; data from 2000-2011)

|                 |     |
|-----------------|-----|
| USA             | 492 |
| India           | 108 |
| China           | 81  |
| The Philippines | 48  |
| Australia       | 42  |
| Canada          | 39  |

Statistical data, although important to understand the scale of the phenomenon, in case of Macedonia almost always has to be accompanied by a footnote. While it is relatively easy to find information about citizens of Macedonia in Europe today (i.e. after 1991), it is in fact very difficult to find information on those who have gone before. In the data from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century regarding Australia, Canada and the United States they are included as nationals of Turkey (the Ottoman Empire), and later – Yugoslavia. From the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century there are estimates of migrants from regions which are now a part of the Republic of Macedonia (cf. Ristovska-Josifovska 2009, 2010; Kasaba 2009). The data from the USA is an estimate about people who declared their Macedonian ancestry (Total ancestry categories tallied for people with one or more ancestry categories reported), as – for the immigration to the USA is very old – Macedonia as a country did not exist. The same is the case with Australia. For instance, in the 1911 census, 275 persons declared Turkey as their birthplace. Among these people were Macedonians. There are also significant differences in official statistics and the data from migrant or aid organizations. For example, in Denmark – according to the Macedonian Information Agency, there are 12,000 citizens of Macedonia living in Denmark (<http://www.mia.com.mk/default.aspx?vId=69998740&IId=2>), and in Sweden – 15,000 (<http://www.mia.com.mk/default.aspx?mId=30&vId=65068760&IId=2&title=MACEDONIA+-+FOREIGN+AFFAIRS+>). The same situation is with Greece – there are 10,000-30,000 Slavic-

speaking Greeks according to the Report about Compliance with the Principles of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (along the guidelines for state reports according to Article 25.1 of the Convention) – (<http://miris.eurac.edu/mugs2/blob.html?type=html&serial=1044526702223>).

It should be noted that the Greek state does not recognize the name “Macedonia” for their neighbouring country. The official name is FYROM (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, unsupported in Greece). Greece also does not recognize Macedonian nationality and the Macedonian language (Slavs living in Greece, ethnic Macedonians or immigrants are hid under the name of Slavic-speaking Greeks). There is also problem with a number of Macedonian refugees who came to Eastern Europe in 1946-1949. For instance, it is estimated that in Poland settled 11,458 (est. by MFA) refugees from Greece, and the largest group constituted ethnic Macedonians.

## **Conclusion**

The Republic of Macedonia in its history experienced different types and patterns of migration – from seasonal emigration of men, through waves of refugees, to family migration to Europe and beyond. It is still a typical country of emigration, although there is an increase of immigrants to this country.

It is not easy to write about mobility from and to Macedonia. There are at least two issues important in the analysis of migration in Macedonia: the first one is that it is a multiethnic country and the data we collect about immigration regards all its citizens, e.g. also Albanians or Turks. Secondly, the Republic of Macedonia has been an independent state only since 1991, and was previously a part of Yugoslavia, and before that – the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, in earlier statistics inhabitants of Macedonia can hide under the name 'Yugoslavs' or 'Turks' . Moreover, when the statistics indicate ethnicity, 'Macedonian' can also apply to a Greek person from the region of Macedonia in northern Greece or to a Bulgarian from 'Pirin Macedonia' in Bulgaria.

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